

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

ON THE UNITY OF
THE INTELLECT
AGAINST THE
AVERROISTS

MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS IN TRANSLATION

NO. 19

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SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

ON THE UNITY OF
THE INTELLECT
AGAINST THE
ÁVERROISTS

(De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas)

*Translated from the Latin
With an Introduction*

by

Beatrice H. Zedler

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Preface

During St. Thomas' second sojourn at Paris (1268-1272), masters and scholars were discussing Averroes' views on the intellect. Even less erudite men were aware of the doctrine that there is only one intellect for the whole human race. William of Tocco, an early biographer of Thomas Aquinas, tells of a certain soldier at Paris who was unwilling to atone for his sins because, as he put it: "If the soul of the blessed Peter is saved, I shall also be saved; for if we know by one intellect, we shall share the same destiny."

Against this error that there is one intellect for all men, Thomas Aquinas wrote, continues William of Tocco, "a wonderful work (*scriptum mirabile*) in which . . . through the very words of Aristotle which Averroes misunderstood, he pulled out this error by the roots . . . so that no one who could grasp the words of Aristotle would doubt that the aforesaid error was contrary to reason." (Quoted by Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant*, p. 103) The *scriptum mirabile* to which William of Tocco referred was the *De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas*.

The critical edition of the Latin text by Leo W. Keeler, S.J., was used for the English translation contained in this book. An introduction, a bibliography, and notes are included as aids to the study of the treatise.

The translator wishes to thank Dr. James H. Robb, Chairman of the Editorial Board, for his many excellent suggestions on the text of the translation. Thanks are due also to Dr. Ida Critelli, Dr. Thomas Anderson, and Dr. Peter Maxwell, who as graduate assistants, provided some valuable help in the work on the notes.

Introduction

"Angel of the Schools though he may be, St. Thomas does not speak from some abstract philosophical heaven. It is to the thirteenth century that St. Thomas gives voice. . . ."¹ The truth of these remarks is particularly evident in St. Thomas' treatise, *On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists*. A polemical work, as the title suggests, it was written to answer a difficult problem of St. Thomas' time; it confronted a challenge that Greek and Arabian philosophy had offered to Christian thinkers.

A. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM OF THE DE UNITATE INTELLECTUS

The source of the problem was Aristotle's *De Anima*, notably Book III, chapter 5. After observing that in nature as a whole we find two factors, a potential factor and a productive or active factor, Aristotle says that "these distinct elements must likewise be found within the soul." He then continues:

"And in fact mind as we have described it is what it is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things: this is a sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colours into actual colours.

"Mind in this sense of it is separable, impassible, unmixed, since it is in its essential nature activity. . . .

". . . in the individual, potential knowledge is in time prior to actual knowledge, but in the universe as a whole it is not prior even in time. Mind is not at one time knowing and at another not. When mind is set free from its present conditions it appears as just what it is and nothing more: this alone is immortal and eternal (we do not, however, remember its former activity because while mind in this sense is impassible, mind as passive is destructible), and without it nothing thinks."²

That Aristotle was here distinguishing between an active intellect that makes things actually intelligible and a passive intellect that receives these intelligibles was clear, but beyond this point his meaning was not altogether clear to his readers. What did he mean by saying that mind is "separable, impassible, unmixed," "immortal and eternal"? Could an intellect with these characteristics be a power of the human soul, or was Aristotle implying that intellect is a substance that is separate and distinct from man, and one for all men?

Among the Greek commentators, Theophrastus (ca. 370-285 B.C.) and Themistius (ca. 387 A.D.) thought Aristotle meant that both active

¹ A. C. Pegis, *Saint Thomas and the Greeks*, p. 2. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1943).

² Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 5, 430a 10-25, tr. J. A. Smith in *Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. R. McKeon. (New York: Random House, 1941).

and passive intellects were parts or powers of each human soul.³ But Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 200 A.D.), although he placed the passive or material intellect within the individual (and perishable) human soul, held that the active intellect is a separately existing intelligence.⁴ Like Alexander, some Arabian thinkers also regarded the active or agent intellect as a separate substance and one for all men.

Avicenna (980-1037) situated his doctrine of the agent intellect within the context of his theory of emanation. At the summit of his universe is a Necessary Being, who is one, incorporeal, and the source of all other beings. This Necessary Being reflects upon itself, thereby necessarily giving rise to the first effect, a pure intelligence. This effect must be one, for from one simple thing, only one can proceed. When this First Intelligence thinks of the Necessary Being, it gives rise to a Second Intelligence. When the First Intelligence thinks of itself as necessary by the First Being, it gives rise to the soul of the outermost celestial sphere; when it thinks of itself as possible in itself it gives rise to the body of this same sphere. Then, in a similar way, the Second Intelligence gives rise to a Third Intelligence and to the soul and body of the second sphere. This emanation of intelligences and spheres is halted only with the production of the sphere of the moon and the tenth or last intelligence, which is the agent intellect or Agent Intelligence.⁵

From this Agent Intelligence, which is one for all men, intelligible forms or species are infused into possible intellects belonging to individual human souls. But these souls can receive the species only after considering and comparing the images that have come from the senses. These movements prepare the soul for the "abstraction," that is, the emanation of intelligible forms.⁶ But the species received by men's possible intellects are not retained. For intellectual knowledge, the soul must again be united with the separate Agent Intelligence.⁷

For Averroes (1126-1198), the famous "Commentator" on Aristotle, not only was the agent intellect a separate substance and one for all men, but also the possible intellect. Against the materialism of Alex-

³ Theophrastus, Fragments Ia & XII in E. Barbotin, *La Théorie Aristotélicienne de l'Intellect d'après Théophraste* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1954), pp. 248-249, 270-271; Themistius, *Paraphrasis eorum quae de Anima Aristotelis*, in *Thémistius: Commentaire sur le Traité de l'Âme d'Aristote: Traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, ed. G. Verbeke (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1957), pp. 224-225, 235.

⁴ Alexander, *De Intellectu et Intellecto*, in G. Théry, *Alexandre d'Aphrodise* (Kain, Belgium: Le Saulchoir, 1926), pp. 74-82.

⁵ Avicenna, *Metaphysica* IX, c. 4, fol. 104v-105r (Venice, 1508).

⁶ Avicenna, *De Anima* V, 5, fol. 25rb-va (Venice, 1508). In the transcription by G. P. Klubertanz, S.J. (St. Louis University, 1949), pp. 125-126.

⁷ *Ibid.*, V, 6, fol. 26rb-va; in Klubertanz, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-131.

ander of Aphrodisias, Averroes held that the possible or "material" intellect must be a simple, impassible substance. It cannot be "numbered to the number of individuals" but must be wholly separate from matter to insure its power for knowing universals.⁸ But since this view leaves the individual man without a spiritual intellect, how then can man have intellectual knowledge?

Man's highest powers, the cogitative power, imagination, and memory, have the task of preparing the sensory data that the separate intellect will utilize. So important is this highest task that man by himself can perform, that Averroes sometimes dignifies the cogitative power with the name of intellect: not possible intellect, however, but *passible* intellect, to designate its generable and corruptible nature.⁹

The separate agent intellect makes actually intelligible the intelligible species potentially present within the phantasms provided by man's sensory powers. The separate possible intellect can then be actuated and become the subject in which knowledge exists. Men's phantasms are, for Averroes, the subject in relation to which knowledge is true.¹⁰ Unless the data of knowledge were provided by man, the separate possible intellect would know nothing.¹¹ Since man as a provider of objects of knowledge, has an indispensable function in the intellect's knowing, he himself somehow shares in this knowing. Averroes is less concerned with explaining just how this can be, than with keeping the intellect free of matter to preserve its function of knowing. He had no awareness of a spiritual intellective soul that could be the form of the body without being immersed in matter.

These views of the intellect by Greek and Arabian thinkers became known to Christians of western Europe. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the works of Aristotle, accompanied by the commentaries of Arabian thinkers, came into Europe in Latin translation. As a result of the work of translation done at the court of Frederick II of Sicily and the School of Archbishop Raymond of Toledo, Spain, a new world of literature was introduced to Christian thinkers. Although Aristotle had previously been known and admired for his logical works, Christians now had access to other works of "The Philosopher," including his work on the soul. They were also reading in Latin translation Avicenna's *De Anima* and Averroes' *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*.

⁸ Averroes, *Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis de Anima Libros* III, comm. 4, pp. 383-384; comm. 5, pp. 388-389; comm. 19, p. 441; II, comm. 32, p. 178. Ed. F. S. Crawford (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953).

⁹ *Ibid.*, III, comm. 6, pp. 415-416; comm. 20, pp. 449-450; comm. 33, pp. 475-476.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, comm. 4, pp. 384-385; comm. 5, p. 412; comm. 18, pp. 439-440.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, comm. 33, p. 476.

One reaction to the influx of the new literature is seen in the condemnations of 1210 and 1215. In 1210 the Provincial Council of Paris prohibited the teaching of Aristotle's works on natural philosophy or their commentaries. In 1215 the statutes of the University of Paris promulgated by Robert of Courçon, the papal legate, forbade the reading of the physical and metaphysical treatises of Aristotle and the expositions of them.¹² But the prohibitions were not effective.

Some Christians were to accept in a modified form, Avicenna's doctrine of a separate agent intellect.¹³ Others were attracted by the views of Averroes. At the request of Pope Alexander IV, St. Albert wrote, in 1256, *On the Unity of the Intellect against Averroes*. Directing his treatise not against Averroes alone, but against Arabian thought, he presented thirty arguments for the unity of the human intellect and thirty-six arguments against it. He stopped with this majority of six in favor of his own position only, he said, because of lack of time.¹⁴

In the following decade a definite Averroist movement seemed to emerge. As more Christian thinkers read Aristotle and Averroes in Latin translation, the Philosopher was seen through the works of his Commentator. The result, for some, was that Philosophy was identified with the Commentator's positions. Philosophy itself, for these Latin Averroists, seemed to say that the possible intellect is a separate substance and one for all men. As philosophers, the Averroists held that this was the conclusion of human reason, but as Christians they refrained from saying that this doctrine was true. Without explicitly teaching a theory of "double truth," such a leading Averroist as Siger of Brabant nevertheless conveyed the impression of a conflict between faith and reason.

The Averroists' views on the intellect and their implications for Christians were censured in 1270 and 1277 in the condemnations of Etienne Tempier, Bishop of Paris.¹⁵ They were also opposed in the writings of St. Bonaventure (1221-1274) and of Giles of Rome (ca.

¹² H. Denifle and A. Chatelain (eds.), *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* I (Paris, 1889) 70, 78-79.

¹³ Gundissalinus, *De Anima*, cap. 10, in R. de Vaux, *Notes et textes sur l'Avicennisme Latin* (Paris: Vrin, 1934), pp. 170-174; R. Bacon, *Opus Majus* I, 9; II, 5. Ed. J. H. Bridges (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), Tome I, pp. 20, 38-41; H. Spettman (ed.), *Johannis Pechami Quaestiones Tractantes de Anima*, q. VI, in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* XIX, 5-6, 73; E. Gilson, "Pourquoi saint Thomas a critiqué

saint Augustin," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* I (Paris: Vrin, 1926-1927), pp. 5-127.

¹⁴ St. Albert, *De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroem*, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. IX (Paris: Vives, 1891), pp. 437-476; F. Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans L'Histoire de l'Aristotélisme* (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1942), pp. 470-473.

¹⁵ Denifle and Chatelain (eds.), *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* I, 486-487, 543-548.

1247-1316).¹⁶ But now let us turn to St. Thomas' treatise against the Averroists.

B. THE AUTHENTICITY, DATE, AND TITLE OF ST. THOMAS' TREATISE

The *De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas* is certainly an authentic work of St. Thomas Aquinas.¹⁷ It was referred to in the lifetime of St. Thomas. It is found in manuscripts explicitly attributed to St. Thomas in the thirteenth century. It is listed in almost all the older catalogues of St. Thomas' writings. Its existence is presupposed by the *De Anima Intellectiva* of Siger of Brabant and by the *De Plurificatione Intellectus Possibilis* (ca. 1280) of Giles of Rome. No serious doubt has been raised about the authenticity of St. Thomas' treatise.

The *De Unitate Intellectus* is one of the later works of St. Thomas Aquinas. After his first period of teaching as a Master at Paris (1256-1259) and after his teaching at the papal curia in Italy (1259-1268), St. Thomas returned to Paris. The *De Unitate Intellectus* belongs to his second period of teaching at Paris (1268-1272). The date has been more exactly stated as the year 1270.¹⁸ Whether the treatise was completed before or after Bishop Tempier's first condemnation of Averroism (December 10, 1270), is not definitely determined, but it is probable that the treatise was finished before the condemnation was issued.¹⁹

The *De Unitate Intellectus* was preceded by such works as the

¹⁶ St. Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Sermo VI, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. IX (Paris: Vives, 1865). Giles of Rome, *Errores Philosophorum*, c. 4, #10-11, ed. J. Koch, tr. J. O. Riedl (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1944); *De Plurificatione Intellectus Possibilis*, ed. F. Bocca (Rome, 1957).

¹⁷ L. W. Keeler, S.J., Introduction to *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Tractatus de Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1936, 1946, 1957), p. xix; P. Mandonnet, *Des Ecrits Authentiques de S. Thomas* (Fribourg, Switzerland: Imprimerie de l'oeuvre de saint Paul, 1910); M. Grabmann, *Die Werke des hl. Thomas von Aquin*, Beiträge XXII, 1-2 (Münster, 1949), pp. 325-328; P. Synave, "Le catalogue officiel des oeuvres de s. Thomas d'Aquin," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* III (1928) pp. 27, 55, 57, 59, 98; I. T. Eschmann, "A Catalogue of St.

Thomas' Works," in E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 409, #47.

¹⁸ See Keeler, Introduction, *op. cit.*, pp. xii, xx-xxi; P. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et L'Averroisme Latin au XIII^e Siècle* (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1911), pp. 103-110; F. Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire de l'Aristotélisme* (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1942), pp. 541, 546-548.

¹⁹ I. Thomas, Introduction to K. Foster and S. Humphries (tr.), *Aristotle's De Anima in the Version of William of Moerbeke and the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), p. 17; D. Salman, "Compte Rendu: F. Van Steenberghen, *Les Oeuvres et la Doctrine de Siger de Brabant*," *Bulletin Thomiste* 14-15 (1937-1939), p. 655; Grabmann, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

Commentary on the Sentences (ca. 1254-1256), the *Summa contra Gentiles* (ca. 1258-1264), much of the *Summa Theologiae* (ca. 1266-1273), the *Disputed Questions on Spiritual Creatures* (ca. 1268), and the *Disputed Questions on the Soul* (ca. 1269). It was roughly contemporaneous with another anti-Averroistic work, the *De Aeternitate Mundi contra Murmurantes* (ca. 1270 or 1271). It was perhaps followed by the writing of some of the *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* (ca. 1269-1273).²⁰

In the manuscripts and the older catalogues the treatise appears under varying titles, for example: *Book or Treatise—concerning the Unity of the Intellect, concerning the Intellect, concerning the Multiplication of the Intellect, concerning the One Intellect, concerning the Intellect and the Intelligible—against the Averroists; against the Averroists of Paris; against the Error of the Averroists, or of Averroes, against Averroes; Book against the Averroists*. But the title most often found is *Treatise concerning the Unity of the Intellect against the Averroists*. Some scribes, thinking that this title needed a clarification, added an explanatory phrase: “concerning the unity of the intellect against the Averroists, or rather against the unity of the intellect which the Averroists held.”²¹

The titles, and a reference to *Averroistae* in the text (in section #17), leave no doubt that it is the Averroists whom St. Thomas is opposing. Attempts have been made to determine more exactly what particular Averroist St. Thomas may have had in mind, for example in #122-123, where he seems to cite a definite individual. Mandonnet thinks that St. Thomas was opposing Siger of Brabant, who was the leader of the Averroists at Paris at that time, and two of the older manuscripts assert this. One is entitled: *The Treatise of Brother Thomas against Master Siger concerning the Unity of the Intellect*; and the other states: “Thomas wrote this against Siger of Brabant and many others, predominant in philosophy at Paris in the year of our Lord, 1270.”²² But no work of Siger that is known thus far seems to be

²⁰ Scholars are not always in agreement on the exact dates for each of these writings; the dates given are approximate. On the dates of St. Thomas' works, see Grabmann, *op. cit.*; Eschmann, *op. cit.*; P. Mandonnet and J. Destrez, *Bibliographie Thomiste* (Kain, Belgium: Le Saulchoir, 1921); A. Walz, “Saint Thomas d'Aquin. Ecrits,” in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* XV, pars 1 (1926) 635-641.

²¹ Keeler, *loc. cit.*, p. xvii: “*Liber, Tractatus—de Unitate Intellectus, de In-*

tellectu, de Multiplicatione Intellectus, de Unico Intellectu, de Intellectu et Intelligibili—contra Averroistas (Parisenses), contra Errorem Averroistarum vel Averroim; Liber contra Averroistas.”—The explanatory phrase is in Mss. o, u, f; see Keeler, *loc. cit.*, p. xviii.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. xviii-xx. See p. xviii: “Tractatus fratris Thomae contra magistrum Sigerum de unitate intellectus;” colophon C: “Haec scripsit Thomas contra Sigerum de Brabantia et alios plurimos Parisius in philosophia reg-

fully and precisely the work St. Thomas attacks in the body of his treatise. Yet this does not mean that St. Thomas did not oppose Master Siger.

C. THE CHRONOLOGICAL RELATION OF ST. THOMAS' TREATISE TO SOME WORKS OF SIGER OF BRABANT

Siger of Brabant (ca. 1240-1284), a younger contemporary of Thomas, was a teacher of philosophy at Paris, in the Faculty of Arts, in 1266. His unorthodox views were included in both of Bishop Tempier's condemnations: December 10, 1270 and March 7, 1277.²³ His *Tractatus de Anima Intellectiva* was thought by Mandonnet to be the work that St. Thomas attacked,²⁴ but later research has shown that it was composed after St. Thomas' treatise. The *De Unitate Intellectus*, scholars have said, does not seem to reflect the *De Anima Intellectiva*; there is no point by point refutation as one might expect in a work of this kind.²⁵ Van Steenberghen adds that if it were a reply, it would be absolutely inadequate and insufficient.²⁶ Rather, the *De Anima Intellectiva* reflects a knowledge of the *De Unitate Intellectus*. In Question III Siger states part of the position of Thomas and comments that Thomas does not philosophize according to the mind of Aristotle; in Question VII he borrows his statement of objections and difficulties from Thomas.²⁷ Van Steenberghen concludes that the *De Anima Intellectiva* was composed after the *De Unitate Intellectus* of St. Thomas.²⁸

But if the *De Anima Intellectiva* followed St. Thomas' treatise, the question, "What work of Siger was St. Thomas opposing?" still remains to be answered.

Perhaps it was a work, no longer extant, that is cited in the *Quodlibeta* of John of Baconthorp, a fourteenth century Carmelite. Chossat points out that the Siger cited in Baconthorp thought, for example, that the intellect is united with man only by means of phantasms, and that, according to Aristotle, only the passive intellect or imaginative power

entes, anno D.ni. 1270." See also Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant*, pp. 110, 132.

²³ E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 718; A. Maurer, *Mediaeval Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 407-408.

²⁴ Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant*, pp. 110, 132.

²⁵ P. Doncoeur, "Notes sur les Averroistes Latins," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 4 (1910), p. 501, cited approvingly by M. Chossat, "Saint Thomas d'Aquin

et Siger de Brabant," *Revue de Philosophie* 24 (1914), pp. 563-565. F. Bruckmüller, *Untersuchungen über Sigers (von Brabant) De Anima Intellectiva* (Munich, 1908), had thought the *De Anima Intellectiva* was not even an Averroist work, but Chossat, *art. cit.*, p. 568, thinks this conclusion is not established.

²⁶ Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire de l'Aristotélisme*, p. 552.

²⁷ Siger de Brabant, *De Anima Intellectiva*, III & VII in Mandonnet, *op. cit.*, pp. 154, 165-167, 168-169.

²⁸ Van Steenberghen, *op. cit.*, pp. 553-554.

is the form of man, not the intellective soul or possible intellect. This Siger also implied that the intellect is a mover just as, in Averroes' context, the intelligence that moves the heavens is, without being a form, a principle of operation for the heavens.²⁹ Chossat concludes that the Siger of Baconthorp closely resembles the Siger that St. Thomas refutes. He adds that without a knowledge of Baconthorp's Siger, one might think the first part of the *De Unitate* captious, entangled, and insistent beyond reason on points which seem evident, but with such a knowledge one sees St. Thomas' treatise as well ordered and adapted to refuting the errors of Siger.³⁰

Another work which may also have been an object of St. Thomas' attack is the *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*. This work, which is dated before 1270 and is averroistic in content, is also attributed to Siger.³¹ Van Steenberghen describes and summarizes these unedited questions but cannot say definitely whether they were known to St. Thomas. He observes, however, that one can find in the *De Unitate* echoes of some of the texts from these questions, notably Siger's discussion on whether the separated soul can suffer from fire.³²

Van Steenberghen concludes, then, that two psychological writings of Siger existed prior to the *De Unitate*. This does not mean that they were necessarily true publications of Siger. They might have existed only in the form of *reportationes* of students. Van Steenberghen sees evidence of this in the *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*.³³ If it be true that St. Thomas' sources were students' notes of Siger's oral teaching, this would explain, says Van Steenberghen, the double fact that St. Thomas seems to use and refute a text and yet reproaches his opponent for not rendering his teaching public and controllable.³⁴ Although

²⁹ Chossat, *art. cit.*, pp. 558-563. John of Baconthorp, *Quodlibeta* I, 1 (Venice, 1527), fol. 2vb, 3ra-rb. See St. Thomas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, #3-79, esp. #17, 63, 67.

³⁰ Chossat, *art. cit.*, pp. 563-565.

³¹ J. J. Duin, *La Doctrine de la Providence dans les Ecrits de Siger de Brabant* (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1954), dates this work before 1271 and includes Question 2 in his book, pp. 57-60, 402. Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire de L'Aristotélisme*, dates the work 1265-1270 (p. 564), discusses its authenticity (p. 514), and summarizes it (pp. 630-632); in *Siger de Brabant: Les Oeuvres Inédites* (1931), he gives citations from it and a description of the content of each question, pp. 164-177.

³² Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire de l'Aristotélisme*, p. 558. See *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*, q. 11, in *Siger de Brabant: Les Oeuvres Inédites*, pp. 170-171, and St. Thomas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, #123.

³³ Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire . . .*, pp. 528, 557.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 557. The latter part of Van Steenberghen's comment is a reference to *De Un. Int.* #124: "... let him not speak in corners, nor in the presence of boys who do not know how to judge about such difficult matters; but let him write against this treatise if he dares. . . ." This may not merely be a criticism of the adversary expressing his views only in oral teaching to young people, rather than expressing them also in

the *De Unitate* was probably directed against many Averroists at Paris, it may well have attacked in particular the doctrines of Siger as known through notes of his oral teachings.

In the final paragraph of the *De Unitate* St. Thomas issues a challenge. Speaking of his opponent he says: "... let him write against this treatise if he dares." (#124) Was the challenge ever accepted? Did Siger ever answer St. Thomas' *De Unitate*?

We have noted that the *De Anima Intellectiva* was written after the *De Unitate* and reveals a knowledge of some of the content of St. Thomas' treatise. Was the *De Anima Intellectiva* then intended as Siger's answer to the *De Unitate*?

Sylvester of Ferrare, O.P. (ca. 1474-1528) tells of a Siger who "... sent to blessed Thomas his treatise *De Intellectu*, in answer to the *Treatise against the Averroists*."³⁵ Chossat identified this *De Intellectu* with the *De Anima Intellectiva*.³⁶ Other scholars (notably Bruno Nardi) have more recently thought that Siger wrote, after 1271, a *De Intellectu* that was distinct from the *De Anima Intellectiva*. Augustino Nifo (1473-ca. 1538) affirmed that Siger had sent a treatise, *De Intellectu*, to Thomas in answer to the treatise against the Averroists. Nifo's comments on the contents of the *De Intellectu* strongly suggest that it is different from the *De Anima Intellectiva* and that it manifests a particular interest in the possible intellect.³⁷ Perhaps then it was

formally written treatises to which everyone has access. It may imply, too, that the oral teaching of the Averroists was imparted to small groups in private places. Keeler notes, *op. cit.*, p. 80, that as late as September 2, 1276, this decree was issued (Denifle & Chatelain, *Charitularium Universitatis Parisiensis* I, 539): "Thus it is that we, in reference to secret small gatherings for teaching, which are forbidden by the sacred canons and are inimical to wisdom, decree and ordain that no master or bachelor, of any faculty whatever, may receive groups to read in private places away from everyone else, because of the many dangers which can result from this, but they must hold their meetings in common places where all can come who will be able to report faithfully on the things which are being taught there; we make exception, however, for grammatical and logical readings, in which there can be no excessive boldness."

³⁵ Franciscus Sylvester Ferrariensis, *Commentaria in Summam contra Gentiles* III, 45; IV, 2 (in Leonine edition of St. Thomas, XIV, p. 119, col. 2). Sylvester speaks of *Rugierius*, but this is regarded as an evident corruption of *Sigerius*. See Van Steenberghe, *Siger dans l'Histoire . . .*, p. 553 and note 3.

³⁶ Chossat, *art. cit.*, p. 570.

³⁷ B. Nardi, *Sigieri di Brabante nel Pensiero del Rinascimento Italiano* (Rome, 1945), pp. 19-26; E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 396-397, gives a translation of Nardi's summary of the main positions of the "lost" *De Intellectu*; see also Gilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 722-723, notes 28-30; on the distinctness of the *De Intellectu* and the *De Anima Intellectiva*, see G. da Palma, *La Dottrina sull'Unità dell'Intelletto in Sigieri di Brabante* (Padua: Casa Editrice Dott. Antonio Milani, 1955), pp. 29-30.

this *De Intellectu*, known now only in the fragments preserved by Nifo, that was written by Siger in answer, or partly in answer, to the *De Unitate*, and perhaps in the years 1272-1273, after St. Thomas had left Paris for Italy.³⁸

The *De Anima Intellectiva*, which refers to Thomas in Questions III and VII, may perhaps have been written between 1273-1276.³⁹ In this work Siger speaks of the intellective soul as a form, not a mover. This contrast with the views of the Siger of Baconthorp and the Siger of the *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*, does not mean that he now accepted a Thomistic position, since this form that he speaks of in the *De Anima Intellectiva* is a *forma intrinsecus operans*, a form intrinsically united to the body for operation. It operates within man in order to know, although it is separate in its being from the body.⁴⁰

A work entitled *Quaestiones in Libros Tres Aristotelis de Anima* has also been attributed to Siger.⁴¹ Published by Van Steenberghen, these questions, which should not be confused with the *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*, express a doctrine of the intellective soul that is very close to that of St. Thomas. Relying on these texts, Van Steenberghen

³⁸ Nardi, *op. cit.*, p. 33, thinks that the *De Intellectu* must have been written before the *De Anima Intellectiva*. On the date of the *De Intellectu*, see da Palma, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

³⁹ See da Palma, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30. Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire* . . . , pp. 553-554, had dated the *De Anima Intellectiva* 1272 or 1273, but this was on Chossat's supposition that the *De Anima Intellectiva* is identical with the *De Intellectu* mentioned by Sylvester of Ferrare; Van Steenberghen does, however, note the difficulties encountered in accepting this supposition.

—It should be noted that Jean of Jandun (d. 1328) also refers to a treatise on the intellect by Siger. Although the name is given as "Remigius," it is clearly Siger who is intended; Nardi, *op. cit.*, p. 21, notes that some manuscripts state more accurately: "Segerus" or "Sirges." The relevant text is as follows: "Et debes scire quod istam solutionem hujus rationis, qualiter homo intelligit ad aliquid, posuit Reverendus doctor Philosophiae magister Remigius de Brabantia in quodam suo Tractatu de intellectu, qui sic incipit: *Cum anima sit aliorum cognoscitiva*. . . ." (Jean of Jandun, *Quaestiones de*

Anima III, 5 (Venice, 1552) fol. 60ra.) Because the *incipit* is the same as that of the *De Anima Intellectiva*, this *De Intellectu* is regarded as identical with the *De Anima Intellectiva*. See S. MacClintock, *Perversity and Error: Studies on the "Averroist" John of Jandun* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1956), pp. 57, 156, note 21; Chossat, *art. cit.*, pp. 569-575; Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire* . . . , pp. 552-553.

⁴⁰ Siger, *De Anima Intellectiva* III, in Mandonnet, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155; Gilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-398, 723-724, note 31; A. Maurer, *op. cit.*, p. 198. Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire* . . . , p. 647, suggests that Siger may have seen in the doctrine of the *forma intrinsecus operans* a compromise between the position of Averroes and that of Thomas Aquinas, but it was only a verbal solution, since in the context of an Aristotelian metaphysics there can be no middle position between a substantial union and a purely operative union that can be only an accidental union.

⁴¹ *Quaestiones in Libros Tres Aristotelis de Anima*, in Van Steenberghen, *Siger de Brabant: Les Oeuvres Inédites*, pp. 11-160.

suggests that the last stage in the evolution of Siger's thought on the soul and the intellect, was a conversion to Thomism.⁴² But because the attribution of these questions to Siger has been criticized for serious reasons, this work cannot be listed among the certainly authentic writings of Siger.⁴³

Because much research still needs to be done on problems of the authenticity and chronology of works attributed to Siger, the relation of Siger's writings to St. Thomas' treatise cannot be stated in a definitive way. Tentatively, however, the sequence of works perhaps could be summarized thus:

- 1) The Siger mentioned by Baconthorp
- 2) Siger's *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*
(in the form of *reportationes*)
- 3) St. Thomas' *De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas*
- 4) Siger's *De Intellectu*, (as known through Nifo's references to it)
- 5) Siger's *De Anima Intellectiva*
- 6) *Quaestiones in Libros Tres Aristotelis de Anima*
(attributed to Siger by Van Steenberghen, but its authenticity is disputed.)

According to Sylvester of Ferrare, Siger's *De Intellectu* was sent to Thomas, who had left for Italy in 1272. We do not know whether St. Thomas ever received that work or whether he saw any part of the *De Anima Intellectiva*. Chossat conjectures that perhaps it may have seemed futile to Thomas to continue the dialogue since the reworded version of Siger's position offered nothing basically new, or perhaps death may have come (March 7, 1274) before St. Thomas had time to answer.⁴⁴

D. THE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF ST. THOMAS' TREATISE

St. Thomas begins the *De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas* with a statement of his purpose and his method of procedure in this work. Although he has written before against Averroes' erroneous view on the intellect, he intends to write against it again and clearly refute it. He is concerned about the spread of this error and the boldness of those who expound it. He distinguishes two aspects of the error: (1) that the possible intellect is a substance that is separate in its being from the body and not united to it as its form; and (2) that this possible intellect is one for all men.

⁴² Van Steenberghen, *Siger de Brabant dans l'Histoire* . . . , pp. 510, 515-527. 653-662. Van Steenberghen, p. 564, dates this work 1275-1277.

⁴³ Gilson, "Compte Rendu," *Bulletin Thomiste* 6 (1940-1942) 5-22; Gilson, "Concerning the Thomism of

Siger of Brabant, "in Dante, the Philosopher (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1949), pp. 317-327; A. Maurer, "The State of Historical Research in Siger of Brabant," *Speculum* 31 (January, 1956) 49-56.

⁴⁴ Chossat, *art. cit.*, p. 575.

His method of procedure will not be to show that the error is contrary to the teachings of the Christian Faith, for this is quite evident. He intends instead to show that the error is against the principles of philosophy and against the words of those very Peripatetics to whom these men appeal. He will therefore challenge them on their own ground by using philosophical arguments and the method of textual analysis.

The two aspects of Averroes' error provide the two main parts of the body of the treatise, with the first three chapters pertaining to the first aspect of the error, and the last two chapters pertaining to its second aspect. The division into five chapters is found in the older editions and in manuscripts and, in Keeler's opinion, was probably made by St. Thomas himself.⁴⁵ The relation of the five chapters to the two main parts of the body of the treatise is presented in this way by Keeler:⁴⁶

- I. The possible intellect is not a substance that is separate in its being.

This is proved

(Chapter I) by the authority of Aristotle,

(Chapter II) and of other Peripatetics;

(Chapter III) by arguments from reason.

- II. The possible intellect is not one in all men.

This is established

(Chapter IV) by arguments, especially from Aristotle,

(Chapter V) by refutations of the adversaries' arguments.

In dealing with the first aspect of Averroes' error, namely, that the intellect is a substance separate in its being from the body, St. Thomas begins with an analysis of Aristotle's texts (Chapter I, sections #3-30) in order to show that this is not the Philosopher's view. So thorough and detailed is the analysis that St. Thomas gives the impression of not omitting any text to which his opponents appealed in support of their views. For them the Philosopher's way of defining the soul implied that the intellective faculty or intellect was excluded from his definitions. For St. Thomas, Aristotle's definitions of soul included the intellect, and the reference to intellect as "separate" meant not separate from the body, but different from sense powers in that it has no corporeal organ. (#25-26)

Among the objections that St. Thomas answers (#31-50), is one that especially reflects the Averroists' view. Assuming that there are

⁴⁵ Keeler, Introduction, *op. cit.*, p. xviii.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Keeler refers the reader to the analytical tables worked out by C. Ottaviano, *Saggio Contra la Dott.*

Averr. Dell' Unità dell' Int. (Lanciano, 1930), pp. 83-85. See also the analysis of Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire . . .*, pp. 633-636.

only two kinds of forms, spiritual forms totally separate from matter, and material forms immersed in matter, the Averroists wondered: How can the intellect be a power of a soul that is the form of the body? On this supposition, would it not be immersed in matter and so be unable to know? Or, differently phrased: How can the human soul be so intimately united with the body as to be its substantial form and yet have one of its powers so separate from the body that that power can have intellectual knowledge? The answer lay, St. Thomas thought, in acknowledging another kind of form of matter. Although some forms of matter neither act by themselves nor exist by themselves, but exist only through the composite, there are other forms of matter that do act by themselves and hence are subsistent. They do not exist through the composite, but the composite exists through them. Not being immersed in matter, they can have acts that are not acts of a corporeal organ. (#28, 30, 37-38, 42) The human soul is this unique kind of form of matter.

At the end of the first chapter St. Thomas says (#50): “. . . from this careful consideration of almost all the words of Aristotle concerning the human intellect it is clear that he was of the opinion that the human soul is the act of the body, and that the possible intellect is a part or power of that soul.”

In Chapter II (#51-59) St. Thomas wishes to show that the Greek and Arabian Peripatetics to whom his opponents appeal, also regarded the possible intellect as a part of the human soul and not as a separate substance. In presenting the views of two of the Greeks, St. Thomas has a special advantage over his adversaries. Instead of relying on Averroes' mention of them, St. Thomas makes use of William of Moerbeke's recent translation of Themistius' *De Anima*. He cites some texts in which Themistius states his own view and that of Theophrastus, and thereby tries to establish that for both, the intellect is a power of the human soul. (#51-55) For Alexander of Aphrodisias he notes that even Averroes admitted that Alexander regarded the possible intellect as the form of the body. (#56)

While admitting that Avicenna's position is not completely in harmony with the view of soul as substantial form, he notes that Avicenna did hold that the intellect is a power of man's soul, and that Algazel acknowledged an operative and a cognitive power as powers of the soul. (#57-58)

St. Thomas states that he has referred to the Greeks and the Arabs not because he wishes to rely upon their authority; rather he wishes to show his opponents that not only the Latin philosophers but also the Greeks and the Arabs whom they hold in esteem, regarded the intellect as a power of the soul. He wonders from which Peripatetics they have

taken their error, and then adds, in sharp terms, "unless perchance they are less willing to be right with other Peripatetics than to be wrong with Averroes, who was not so much a Peripatetic as a perverter of Peripatetic philosophy." (#59)

In Chapter III (#60-85) St. Thomas gives philosophical arguments to show that the intellect is a power of the soul which is the form of the body. His principal argument starts from the evident fact that this individual man knows (*Hic homo singularis intelligit*). (#62) After stating Averroes' account of how this man knows (#63), he rejects it, stressing especially that in Averroes' context, man is not really a knower but the intellect's object of knowledge. (#63-66)

Seeing that Averroes has not explained how this man knows, some have suggested a variation of the Commentator's account. They said that the intellect is united to the individual as a mover and therefore the man knows. But what is the individual man in this context? St. Thomas asks. Is he intellect alone (*motor*), or a body animated by a vegetative and sensitive soul (*motum*), or the composite resulting from the union of mover and moved? (#67) After a careful critique of these three hypotheses (#68-78), St. Thomas concludes that one cannot say that the intellect is united to man as a mover, and even if it were, this would not explain that this individual man knows. (#79)

Besides this psychological argument, St. Thomas presents, though more briefly, two other arguments to show that the intellect cannot be a substance that is separate in its being from the body. Since the distinguishing act of man's species is the act of understanding, the principle of this act, that is the intellective soul, must be united to man's body as its form. (#80) The other argument based on requirements of the moral order points out that if the intellect were separate, then the will would also be separate. But then man would not be the master of his acts, and the basis of moral philosophy would be destroyed. (#81-82)

St. Thomas concludes this chapter by refuting objections of the Averroists. (#83-85) In giving his answers he stresses again the importance of grasping that the soul, though a form of matter, is not a material form. (#83-84)

Having completed his discussion of the first aspect of Averroes' error, that the intellect is a substance separate in its being from the body, St. Thomas proceeds in Chapter IV (#86-98) to consider the second aspect of the error: that the intellect is one for all men. He remarks that although something can perhaps be said for the unity of the agent intellect, to say that the possible intellect is one for all men involves absurd consequences. Among the consequences that he discusses (#86-91) is that there would then be but one knowing being

and one act of understanding and willing. This view then fails to account for the obvious diversity of acts of knowing and willing. Besides, it is contrary to the teachings of Aristotle (#92-96); even if it were not, no matter how the relation of the one intellect to our phantasms is explained in Averroes' context, Averroes' doctrine cannot account for the fact that man knows. (#96-98)

In Chapter V (#99-124) St. Thomas tries to understand why the Averroists are opposed to a doctrine of the plurality of possible intellects. He states and answers several objections. The Averroists argue, for example, that because the thing understood is one, therefore the intellect must be one. St. Thomas shows that they prove too much, for they should conclude then not only that there is one intellect for all men, but that there is only one intellect in the whole universe, thus denying plurality to separate substances. (#107) St. Thomas tries to probe to the source of their difficulty by asking what they mean by "the thing understood." Do they mean a thing outside the mind or species within the mind? The latter is really their meaning, St. Thomas shows, and their trouble arises from not seeing a distinction between the two meanings. (#109-110) St. Thomas tries to show his opponents how one existent thing can be known by many persons by means of the species which each one's intellect has. (#112-113) After the discussion of doctrinal difficulties, St. Thomas again calls attention to philosophers' actual texts. He stresses that the Greeks and the Arabs to whom his opponents mistakenly appeal in support of their error, have all upheld a plurality of possible intellects. (#119-121)

In the last two sections (#122-123) of this part, St. Thomas addresses a more direct and theological criticism to his opponents and to one unnamed Averroist in particular. What disturbs St. Thomas even more than their error concerning one intellect, is the irreverent attitude they have towards the Christian Faith. To say, as one Averroist does: "I necessarily conclude through reason that the intellect is one in number; but I firmly hold the opposite through faith," is to imply that faith is concerned with something false and impossible. To so oppose reason and faith, and to dispute about matters of faith that do not pertain to philosophy, is unbecoming to Christians.

In the last section of the *De Unitate* (#124) St. Thomas restates (from #2) the method he has used to refute the Averroists' error; he has appealed, in the body of his treatise, not to the teachings of faith but to the arguments and words of the philosophers themselves. St. Thomas concludes his treatise by issuing a challenge in unusually strong and vigorous language: ". . . if there be anyone boasting of his knowledge, falsely so-called, who wishes to say something against what we have written here, let him not speak in corners, nor in the presence

of boys who do not know how to judge about such difficult matters; but let him write against this treatise if he dares; and he will find not only me who am the least of others, but many other lovers of truth, by whom his error will be opposed, or his ignorance remedied."

The following outline may serve as a summary of the principal divisions and subdivisions of St. Thomas' treatise:

An Outline of the *De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas*

- I. Foreword: Statement of Purpose and Method: #1-2.
- II. Is the Intellect a Substance Separate in its Being from the Body? #3-85
 - A. This is not the view of Aristotle: Chapter I: #3-50
 1. *De Anima* of Aristotle excludes an Averroistic interpretation: #3-26
 - a. Analysis of Aristotle's definitions of soul: #3-13
 - b. Interpretation of words at beginning of III *de Anima*: #14-16
 - c. Analysis of Aristotle's references to Empedocles and Anaxagoras: #17-26
 2. Interpretation of a text from *Physics*: #27-30
 3. Refutation of objections: #31-50
 - B. This is not the view of the Peripatetics: Chapter II: #51-59
 1. Greeks: #51-56
 2. Arabs: #57-58
 3. Conclusion: #59
 - C. This is not the view of sound philosophy: Chapter III: #60-85
 1. Arguments by which one can establish that the intellectual soul is the substantial form of man: #60-62
 - a. Principal argument:
 - 1) Statement of argument proceeding from this undeniable fact: *Hic homo singularis intelligit*: #60-62
 - 2) Averroes' view fails to explain this fact: #63-66
 - 3) The view of certain Averroists that intellect is united to body only as a mover also fails to explain how each man understands: #67-79
 - b. Argument proceeding from a consideration of man as a member of the human species: #80
 - c. Argument based on requirements of moral order: #81-82
 2. Refutation of objections proposed by Averroists: #83-85
- III. Is the Intellect One for all Men? #86-123
 - A. The possible intellect is not one for all men: Chapter IV: #86-98
 1. Unicity of the intellect involves absurd consequences: #87-91

2. Unicity of the intellect is incompatible with Aristotle's doctrine: #92-96
3. No matter how the relation of the intellect to our phantasms is understood, the doctrine of one possible intellect for all men cannot explain human knowledge: #96-98
- B. Objections against the plurality of possible intellects, and refutations of these objections: Chapter V: #99-121
- C. Special criticism of Christian Averroists: Chapter V: #122-123

IV. Conclusion of the Treatise: #124

Although the *De Unitate Intellectus* was written to answer a definite problem of St. Thomas' time, it was not just an occasional or ephemeral work. It touches upon some very basic and vital questions which surpass in their reach, the limits of a thirteenth century polemic. For example:

- (1) What is the soul?
- (2) What powers does the human soul have?
- (3) What is the relation of the intellect to the human soul?
- (4) How is the intellective power like the senses, and how is it unlike the senses?
- (5) What is meant by saying that the soul is the form of the body?
- (6) Why can it not be said that the soul is related to the body as a mover?
- (7) How can the soul be the form of the body and yet some power of the soul not be a power of the body?
- (8) How can the soul be so intimately united with the body as to be its form and yet be so separate from the body as to be able to exist without it?
- (9) Is every form of matter a material form?
- (10) What is meant by saying that matter is a principle of individuation?
- (11) What are the moral implications of the view that there is one possible intellect for all men?
- (12) Can anything be said in favor of the view that there is one agent intellect for all men?
- (13) What is the nature of knowing?
- (14) Is knowledge a transitive or an immanent action?
- (15) What is "the thing understood": a thing in itself, or a thing-in-the-mind?
- (16) What is meant by abstraction?
- (17) What is meant by intelligible species?
- (18) What is meant by teaching? by learning?
- (19) How can many persons know one thing?
- (20) How does knowledge exist in us when we are not actually knowing?
- (21) Can God do what is contradictory or impossible?
- (22) Can reason demonstrate the truth of a proposition that is contrary to faith?

- (23) Is reason competent to deal with every question?
 (24) What is the relation between faith and reason?

St. Thomas' treatment of these and other questions in the *De Unitate* is notable for its clarity of expression and the depth of his philosophical insight.

E. The Present Translation

There have been many editions of the *De Unitate Intellectus*. Father Leo W. Keeler, S.J., gives a history of these editions from the *incunabula* through the editions of the first three decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁷ He studied over twenty manuscripts and early editions to establish the text for his own edition, which was first published at Rome and reprinted in 1946 and 1957.⁴⁸ It has been described as a "very good" and "thoroughly reliable" edition.⁴⁹

This volume contains an English translation of Father Keeler's edition of St. Thomas' text. It includes Keeler's section numbers to facilitate reference to the text, and Keeler's titles for chapters and parts of chapters. Although using Keeler's notes as a guide, it does not reproduce them exactly. It utilizes, for example, more recent editions of Averroes' *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* and of William of Moerbeke's translation of Themistius' *Commentary*.

The bibliography which follows in Section F, is intended to direct the reader to works that will aid in the understanding of the background and content of the *De Unitate*, and of some of the main problems with which the treatise is concerned.

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⁴⁷ Keeler, "History of the Editions of the *De Unitate Intellectus*," *Gregorianum* 17 (Jan.-Mar., 1936) 53-81.

⁴⁸ Keeler, *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Tractatus de Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas*: Editio Critica. (Rome:

Gregorian University, 1936, 1946, 1957).

⁴⁹ Van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'Histoire . . .*, p. 633, note 2; Eschmann, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

#82. If, therefore, the intellect does not belong to this man in such a way that it is truly one with him, but is united to him only through phantasms or as a mover, the will will not be in this man, but in the separate intellect.³⁷ And so this man will not be the master of his act, nor will any act of his be praiseworthy or blameworthy. This is to destroy the principles of moral philosophy.

Since this is absurd and is contrary to human life (for it would not be necessary to take counsel or make laws), it follows that the intellect is united to us in such a way that it and we constitute what is truly one being. This surely can be only in the way in which it has been explained, that is, that the intellect is a power of the soul which is united to us as form. It remains, therefore, that this must be held without any doubt, not on account of the revelation of faith, as they say, but because to deny this is to strive against what is clearly apparent.

(#83-85. Answer is given to one who objects that the intellect thus becomes a material form.)

#83. It is, in fact, not difficult to answer the arguments that they bring against this. For they say that from this position it follows that the intellect would be a material form,³⁸ and would not be stripped of all natures of sensible things; and that consequently whatever is received in the intellect, will be received individually as in matter, and not universally. And further, if it is a material form, it is not actually intelligible; and so the intellect will not be able to understand itself, which is clearly false; for no material form is actually but only potentially intelligible, but it is made actually intelligible by abstraction.

Now the solution of these difficulties appears from what was said above. For we do not say that the human soul is the form of the body according to its intellective power, which, according to Aristotle's doctrine³⁹ is not the act of any organ; whence it remains that the soul, as regards its intellective power, is immaterial and receives things immaterially, and understands itself. Wherefore Aristotle expressly says that "the soul is the place of species, not the whole [soul], but the intellect."⁴⁰

#84. But if it be objected against this that a power of the soul cannot be more immaterial or more simple than the soul's essence, the

³⁷ St. Thomas, *Sum. cont. Gent.* II, 60.
See also *De Un. Int.*, #89.

³⁸ Averroes, *In de Anima*, III, comm. 4, pp. 385-386, lines 62-80. See Siger, *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*, Q. VII, in Van Steenberghen, *Siger de Brabant: Les Oeuvres Inédites*, p. 168; also Siger, *De Anima Intel-*

lectiva, Q. III (written after the *De Un. Int.*) in Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'Averroïsme Latin au XIII^e Siècle*, p. 153.

³⁹ Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 4, 429a 24-26; 429a 29 - 429b 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 429a 27-28.

reasoning would proceed soundly if the essence of the human soul were the form of matter in such a way that it would not exist through its own act of existing,⁴¹ but through the act of existing of the composite, as is true of other forms, which of themselves have neither the act of existing nor an operation apart from their union with matter; and on that account they are said to be immersed in matter. But the human soul exists by its own act of existing, in which matter in some way shares [though] not wholly comprising it, since the dignity of this form is greater than the capacity of matter; nothing therefore prevents the soul from having some operation or power that matter cannot reach.

#85. Moreover, let him who says this consider that if this intellectual principle, by which we understand, were to exist with an existence that is separate and distinct from the soul which is the form of our body, it would be in itself understanding and understood; and it would not understand at one time and at another not. Furthermore, it would not need to know itself through intelligibles and through acts but through its own essence, like other separate substances. And furthermore, it would not be appropriate for it to need our phantasms for understanding;⁴² for it is not found in the order of things that superior substances need inferior substances for their own principal perfections; just as celestial bodies are neither formed nor perfected for their own operations from inferior bodies. Therefore there is great improbability in the statement that the intellect is a kind of principle that is separate according to its substance and yet that it is perfected and comes to know actually through species received from phantasms.

⁴¹ See *De Un Int.*, #27-28.

⁴² *Q.D. de Anima* 2; *Sum. cont. Gent.* II, 96-98.

CHAPTER IV.

(#86-98. The possible intellect is not one for all men.)

(#86-91. If such a unity were posited, there would exist only one being that understands and one that wills.)

#86. Now that we have considered these points concerning their position that the intellect is not the soul which is the form of our body, nor part of the soul, but something separate according to its substance, what remains to be considered is this: that they say that the possible intellect is one in all [men]. Perhaps there might be some reason to say this concerning the agent intellect, and many philosophers have held this.¹ For no difficulty seems to follow, if many things are perfected by one agent, just as by one sun all the visual potencies of animals are perfected for seeing. Yet even this would not be the meaning of Aristotle, who held that the agent intellect is something in the soul, and for this reason he compared it to light.² But Plato, holding that there is one separate intellect, compares it to the sun, as Themistius says.³ For there is but one sun, but many lights diffused by the sun for seeing. But whatever may be the case with the agent intellect, to say that the possible intellect is one for all men seems impossible for many reasons.

#87. First of all, because if the possible intellect is that by which we understand, it must be said that the individual man who understands either is intellect itself or that the intellect formally inheres in him, not indeed in the sense that it would be the form of the body, but because it is a power of the soul which is the form of the body. But if someone should say that the individual man is intellect itself, it follows that this individual man would not be different from that individual man, and that all men would be one man, not indeed by a sharing of the species, but in the sense that there would be only one individual.⁴

If on the other hand, intellect is in us formally, as has already been said, it follows that there would be diverse souls for diverse bodies. For just as man is [composed] of body and soul, so this man, for example Callias or Socrates is [composed] of this body and this soul. But if souls are diverse, and the possible intellect is a power of the soul by which the soul understands, the possible intellect must be different

¹ See St. Thomas, *In Sent.* II, d. 17, q. 2, a. 1; *Q.D. de Anima* 16; *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 79, a. 4; Avicenna, *De Anima* V, 5, fol. 25rb, in Klubertanz, pp. 125-126; Averroes, *In de Anima* III, comm. 19, p. 441, lines 30-33.

² Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 5, 430a, 15-16.

³ Themistius, *op. cit.* VI, p. 235, lines 10-11.

⁴ See *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 76, a. 2.

in number. For it is impossible to imagine that in diverse things there be a power that is numerically one.

Now if anyone should say that man understands by the possible intellect as by something that belongs to him, but which is a part of him not as a form but as a mover, it has already been shown above that if this position is held, it can in no way be said that Socrates understands.⁵

#88. But let us grant that Socrates would understand by reason of the fact that the intellect understands, although the intellect be only a mover, as a man sees by reason of the fact that his eye sees. And to follow out the comparison, let it be held that for all men there is an eye that is numerically one; it remains to be asked whether all men would be one who sees or many who see.

To investigate the truth of this, we must consider that the question about the first mover is one thing, and that about the instrument, another.⁶ For if many men use numerically one and the same instrument there are said to be many operators; for example, when many use one machine to throw or lift a stone. But if the principal agent be one, using many things for instruments, nevertheless the operator is one, but perhaps the operations are diverse because of the diverse instruments. But sometimes even the operation is one, although many instruments are required for it. Thus, therefore, the unity of the one operating is viewed not according to the instruments, but according to the principal agent using the instruments.

Therefore, in the aforesaid position, if the eye were the principal agent in man, which would use all the powers of the soul and parts of the body as instruments, the many having one eye would be one who sees. But if the eye be not the principal agent in man, but something which uses the eye would be more primary than it, and this would be diverse in diverse men, there would indeed be many seeing but by one eye.

#89. Now it is clear that the intellect is that which is the principal agent in man, and that it uses all the powers of the soul and the members of the body as if they were organs. And on this account Aristotle said subtly that man is intellect "or is principally this."⁷ If, therefore, there is one intellect for all, it follows of necessity that there be one who understands and consequently one who wills and one who uses according to the choice of his will all those things by which men are diverse from one another. And from this it further follows that there would be no difference among men in respect to the free choice

⁵ See *De Un. Int.*, #79. Also *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 76, a. 2; *Sum. cont. Gent.* II, 73; *Q.D. de Anima* 3.

⁶ See *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 76, a. 2.

⁷ Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* IX, c. 8, 1169a 2.

of the will, but it [the choice] would be the same for all, if the intellect in which alone would reside pre-eminence and dominion over the use of all other [powers] is one and undivided in all. This is clearly false and impossible. For it is opposed to what is evident and destroys the whole of moral science and everything which relates to the civil intercourse which is natural to man, as Aristotle says.⁸

#90. Furthermore, if all men understand by one intellect, howsoever it be united to them, whether it be as a form or as a mover, it follows of necessity that at one time and with respect to one intelligible there be numerically one act of understanding for all men. For example, if I understand a stone and you likewise, there will have to be one and the same intellectual operation in me and in you.⁹ Because for the same active principle, regardless of whether it be form or mover, and with respect to the same object, the operation of the same species at the same time can be only one in number. This is clear from what the Philosopher says in Book V of the *Physics*.¹⁰ Whence if there were many men having one eye, the act of seeing of all of them would be only one with respect to the same object at the same time.

#91. Similarly, therefore, if the intellect were one in all men, it follows that there would be only one intellectual action for all men understanding the same thing at the same time; especially since none of those things by which men are said to differ from one another would share in the intellectual operation. For the phantasms are preparations for the action of the intellect, as colors are for the act of sight. Therefore the act of the intellect would not be diversified by their diversity, especially in respect to one intelligible. Yet they hold that it is by these phantasms that the knowledge of this man and the knowledge of that man are diverse, in so far as this man understands those things of which he has phantasms, and that man understands other things of which he has phantasms.¹¹ But in two men who know and understand the same thing, the intellectual operation itself can in no way be diversified by the diversity of the phantasms.

(#92-95. This unity is opposed to the words of the Philosopher concerning the possible intellect and the habit of knowledge.)

#92. But it must still be shown that this position is clearly opposed to what Aristotle says. For when he had said of the possible intellect that it is separate and that it is all things potentially, he adds:

⁸ Aristotle, *Pol.* I, 1, 1253a 2-3.

⁹ See St. Thomas, *Q.D. de Anima* 3; *De Spir. Creat.* 9.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Phys.* V, 4, 227b 21 - 228b

1. See also VII, 1, 242a 32 - 242b 4.

¹¹ See Averroes, *In de Anima* III, comm. 5, p. 400, lines 380-390; p. 412, lines 724-728.

"when it thus becomes singulars (that is in act), as one who knows is said to be such [an agent knowing] actually";¹² that is, in this way: as knowledge is an act, and as one who knows is said to be in act in so far as he has the habit.¹³ Then he adds: "This happens when he can without delay act through himself. It indeed is therefore even then in potency in a certain way, yet not in the same way as before learning or discovering."¹⁴ And afterwards, when he had inquired "If the intellect is simple and impassible and has nothing in common with anything else, as Anaxagoras said, how will it understand if to understand is to undergo something?"¹⁵ And to explain this, he answers by saying: "that the intellect is in a certain way potentially the intelligibles, but it is actually nothing before it understands. It must be like a tablet on which nothing is actually written; indeed this is the case with the intellect."¹⁶

It is therefore Aristotle's position that the possible intellect, before learning or discovering, is in potency, like a tablet on which nothing is actually written. But after learning and discovering, it is in act according to the habit of science, by which it can act through itself, although even then it is in potency to actual consideration.

#93. Here three things must be noted. First, that the habit of science is the first act of the possible intellect itself, which according to this [habit] comes into act and can act through itself. But science is not only according to the illumined phantasms, as some say, nor is it a capability that is acquired by us from frequent meditation and exercise so that we may be in contact with the possible intellect through our phantasms.¹⁷

Secondly, it should be noted that before our learning or discovering, the possible intellect itself is in potency like a tablet on which nothing is written.

Thirdly, that by our learning or discovering, the possible intellect itself is put into act.

#94. But these [views] can in no way stand, if there be one possible intellect for all who are, who will be, and who have been. For it is clear that the species are retained in the intellect (for it is the place of species, as the Philosopher had said above).¹⁸ And further, knowledge is a permanent habit. If therefore through some previous man, the intellect has been put into act according to some intelligible spe-

¹² Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 4, 429b 5-7.

¹³ See *Sum. cont. Gent.* II, 73.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 4, 429b 7-9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 429b 23-25.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 429b 30-430a 2.

¹⁷ See Avicenna, *De Anima* V, 6, fol.

26rb-va, in Klubertanz, pp. 130-132.

See also *Sum. cont. Gent.* II, 74; *De Ver.* q. 10, a. 2; *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 79, a. 6.

¹⁸ Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 4, 429a 27-28.

cies, and has been perfected according to the habit of science, that habit and those species remain in it.

But since every recipient must be lacking that which it receives, it is impossible that through my learning or discovering, those species be acquired in the possible intellect.¹⁹ For even if someone should say that through my discovery the possible intellect would be put into act regarding something new, for example, if I discover some intelligible that has been discovered by no previous man; yet this cannot happen in learning; for I can learn only what one who teaches me has known. Therefore it is in vain to say that before learning or discovering, the intellect was in potency.

#95. But someone might add that men always existed, according to the opinion of Aristotle;²⁰ and that therefore there would not have been a first man understanding; and so through no one's phantasms have the intelligible species been acquired in the possible intellect, but the intelligible species of the possible intellect are eternal.²¹ In vain therefore did Aristotle posit the agent intellect, which would make intelligibles in potency to be intelligible in act. In vain, too, did he hold that phantasms are related to the possible intellect as colors are related to sight, if the possible intellect gets nothing from the phantasm.

Besides, it would seem to be very unreasonable that a separate substance should receive from our phantasms and that it would be able to know itself only after our learning or understanding; because Aristotle after the foregoing words adds: "And it can then understand itself,"²² that is, after learning or discovering. For a separate substance is intelligible in itself; therefore, if the possible intellect were a separate substance, it would understand itself through its own essence. For this it would not need intelligible species that would come to it through our understanding or discovery.

(#96-98. The reply of those who say that Aristotle is speaking of the possible intellect only in so far as it is in contact with us, is not sufficient.)

#96. Now if they should wish to avoid these difficulties by saying that Aristotle made all of the preceding remarks about the possible intellect in so far as it is in contact with us and not in so far as it is in itself,²³ it must first be said that Aristotle's words do not mean this.

¹⁹ St. Thomas, *De Spir. Creat.* 9.

²⁰ Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption*, II, 11, 338a 16 - 338b 20; II, 10, 336b 25 - 337a 1; Averroes, *In de Anima* II, comm. 34, pp. 182-183, lines 51-58.

²¹ St. Thomas, *Sum. cont. Gent.* II, 73.

²² Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 4, 429b 9. See *Sum. cont. Gent.* II, 96-98.

²³ Averroes, *In de Anima* III, comm. 5, p. 404, lines 500-510; pp. 411-412, lines 707-710, 724-728.

On the contrary, he speaks of the possible intellect itself according to what is proper to it, and in so far as it is distinguished from the agent intellect. Then if the force of Aristotle's words is ignored, let us hold, as they say, that the possible intellect would have from eternity intelligible species through which it is in contact with us according to the phantasms that are in us.

#97. For the intelligible species which are in the possible intellect and the phantasms which are in us must be related in one of these three ways: One of them is that the intelligible species which are in the possible intellect, are received from the phantasms which are in us, as the words of Aristotle imply; and this cannot be according to the aforesaid position, as was shown.²⁴ Now the second way is that those species would not be received from phantasms, but would shine upon our phantasms; for example, if there were some species in the eye shining upon the colors which are in the wall. Now the third way is that the intelligible species which are in the possible intellect, would neither be received from phantasms nor would they impress something upon the phantasms.

#98. Now if the second is posited, that is, that the intelligible species illumine the phantasms and for this reason they would be known; it follows, first, that phantasms are made actually intelligible not through the agent intellect, but through the possible intellect according to its own species. Secondly, that such an illumination of the phantasms would not be able to make the phantasms intelligible in act; for phantasms are made intelligible in act only through abstraction; but this would be a reception rather than an abstraction. And further, since every reception is according to the nature of the thing received, the illumination of the intelligible species that are in the possible intellect, will not be in the phantasms that are in us in an intelligible way, but in a sensible and material way. And thus we would not be able to understand the universal through an illumination of this kind. But if the intelligible species of the possible intellect are neither received from phantasms nor shine upon them, they will be entirely unrelated and have no proportion to them; nor would the phantasms contribute anything to understanding. But this is contrary to what is evident.

So therefore in every way it is impossible that there should be only one possible intellect for all men.

²⁴ See *De Un. Int.*, #95.

CHAPTER V.

(#99-124. Solution of the arguments attacking the plurality of the possible intellect.)

(#99-105. Objections 1 and 2: The intellect is an immaterial form; therefore it cannot be multiplied according to the multiplication of bodies. That if it were so multiplied, it would endure as one [intellect] after the destruction of the bodies.)

#99. It now remains to answer those arguments by which they strive to reject the plurality of the possible intellect.

The first of these is: since whatever is multiplied according to the division of matter is a material form, substances that are separate from matter are not many in one species. If, therefore, there were many intellects in many men who are numerically divided from one another by the division of matter, it would follow of necessity that the intellect would be a material form.¹ This is against the words of Aristotle and against the proof by which he proves that the intellect is separate.² If, therefore, it is separate and is not a material form, it is in no way multiplied according to the multiplication of bodies.

#100. They rely so much on this argument that they say that God could not make many intellects of one species in different men. For they say that this would imply a contradiction; because to have a nature that may be numerically multiplied is different from the nature of a separate form.³

But they go further, being willing to conclude from this that no separate form is one in number nor is it anything individuated. They say that this is apparent from the word itself; because a thing is not one in number unless it is one of a number. But a form freed from matter is not one of a number, because it does not have in itself the cause of number, since the cause of number is from matter.

#101. But to begin with the latter point, they do not seem to know the proper meaning of what was just mentioned. For Aristotle says in

¹ Keeler notes that Averroes constantly proceeds on the supposition that if one applies Aristotle's definition, "the first act of the body" to the intellectual soul, it must be considered as a material form. See Averroes, *In de Anima* III, comm. 5, p. 402, lines 432-438. See also Siger, *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*, Q. IX, in Van Steenberghe, *Siger: Les Oeuvres Inédites*, p. 169; also *De Anima In-*

tellectiva, VII, in Mandonnet, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

² Aristotle, *De Anima* I, 1, 403a 10-12; I, 4, 408b 17-18; II, 2, 413b 25-28; III, 5, 430a 18-23. See discussion in *De Un. Int.* #8-9, 25, 31, 36-39.

³ Siger, *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*, Q. IX, in Van Steenberghe, p. 169; *De Anima Intellectiva*, VII, in Mandonnet, p. 166.

Book IV of the *Metaphysics*: "The substance of each thing is one but not accidentally," and that "one is nothing else except being."⁴ A separate substance, therefore, if it is being, is one according to its substance, especially since Aristotle says in Book VIII of the *Metaphysics* that those things which do not have matter, do not have a cause [outside themselves] for their being one and for their being.⁵ But one, in Book V of the *Metaphysics*, is spoken of in four ways, namely, in number, species, genus, proportion.⁶ It should not be said that any separate substance is one only in species or genus, because this is not to be one simply. It remains, therefore, that any separate substance is one in number. But something is not said to be one in number because it is one of a number; for number is not the cause of a thing being one but conversely, because in being numbered, a thing is not divided; for one is that which is not divided.

#102. Further, it is not true to say that every number is caused by matter; for Aristotle would have sought in vain the number of separate substances. Aristotle also holds in Book V of the *Metaphysics* that many is said not only of number but of species and genus.⁷

Nor is it true to say that a separate substance is not singular and something individual; otherwise it would not have any operation since acts belong only to singulars, as the Philosopher says,⁸ whence he argues against Plato in Book VII of the *Metaphysics*⁹ that if ideas are separate, an idea will not be predicated of many, nor will it be able to be defined, just as is the case with other individuals which are unique in their species, like the sun and the moon. For matter is not the principle of individuation in material things except in so far as matter cannot be participated in by many because it is the first subject not existing in another.¹⁰ Therefore even concerning the idea, Aristotle says that if the idea were separate, it would be something, that is, an individual¹¹ which could not possibly be predicated of many.

#103. Separate substances, therefore, are individuals and singular. But they are not individuated by matter, but by the very fact that it is not their nature to be in another, and consequently they are not participated in by many.

From this it follows that if it is the nature of some form to be participated in by another in such a way that it is the act of some matter, that [form] can be individuated and multiplied through rela-

⁴ Aristotle, *Met.* IV, 2, 1003 a 31-32.

⁵ *Ibid.*, VIII, 6, 1045a 36 - b 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, V, 6, 1016b 31-35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1016b 33 - 1017a 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 1, 981a 16-17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, VII, 15, 1040a 8-30.

¹⁰ See *In Sent.* IV, d. 12, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 and ad 3; *Sum. Theol.* III, q. 77, a. 2.

¹¹ See St. Thomas, *In Met.* VII, lect. 15, 1612; *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 76, a. 2, ad 3.

tion to matter. But it has already been shown above¹² that the intellect is a power of the soul which is the act of the body. In many bodies, therefore, there are many souls, and in many souls there are many intellectual powers which are called intellects. Nor on this account does it follow that the intellect is a material power, as was shown above.¹³

#104. Now if anyone should object that, if they are multiplied according to bodies, it follows that when the bodies are destroyed, many souls would not remain, the solution is clear from what has been said above. For anything is a being in so far as it is one, as is said in Book IV of the *Metaphysics*.¹⁴ Therefore, just as the to be of the soul is indeed in the body inasmuch as it is the form of the body, nor does it exist before the body, and yet after the body is destroyed it still remains in its to be, so each soul remains in its own unity, and consequently many souls in their manyness.¹⁵

#105. Now they argue very crudely to show that God could not effect that there be many intellects, since they believe that this would involve a contradiction. For even granted that it were not of the nature of the intellect to be multiplied, it would not need to follow on this account that the multiplication of the intellect would involve a contradiction. For nothing prevents a thing from having from another cause, an effect for which it does not have a cause in its own nature. Just as a heavy thing does not have from its own nature the property of being high up, yet that a heavy thing be high up does not involve a contradiction; but for a heavy thing to be up according to its own nature would involve a contradiction. So therefore if the intellect were naturally one for all men because it would not have a natural cause of multiplication, it could nevertheless receive multiplication from a supernatural cause, and this would not imply a contradiction. This we say not because of the case in question, but rather lest this form of arguing be applied to other topics; for so they might conclude that God could not effect that the dead rise again and that the blind have their sight restored.

(#106-113. Objections 3: The thing understood is one for all; therefore the intellect is also one for all.)

#106. But further, for the defense of their error, they propose another argument. For they ask whether the thing understood is completely one in me and in you, or two in number and one in species. If the thing understood is one, then the intellect will be one. If two in

¹² *De Un. Int.*, #3-82.

¹³ *De Un. Int.* #38, 83-85.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Met.* IV, 2, 1003b 30-34.

¹⁵ See *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 76, a. 2, ad 2;
Q.D. de Anima 3; *De Spir. Creat.* 9,
ad 3; *Comp. Theol.* 85.

number and one in species, it follows that the things understood will have an understood object; for whatever are two in number and one in species are one thing [as] understood, because there is one quiddity through which it is understood; and so it would proceed to infinity, but this is impossible.¹⁶ Therefore it is impossible that the things understood should be two in number in me and in you. There is, therefore, only one thing [understood] and the intellect is only one in number for all.

#107. Now it must be asked of those who think that they are so subtle in their argument whether [the fact] that the things that are understood are two in number and one in species is against the notion of the thing understood in so far as it is understood, or in so far as it is understood by man. And it is clear, according to what they hold, that this is against the notion of the thing understood in so far as it is understood. For it is of the notion of the thing understood, in so far as [it is] of this kind, that it have no need of anything being abstracted from it, in order that it may be understood. Therefore, according to their reasoning, we can simply conclude that there is only one thing understood, and not merely one thing understood by all men. And if there is only one thing understood, according to their reasoning it follows that there is only one intellect in the whole world, and not merely in men. Therefore, our intellect is not only a separate substance, but it is even God Himself. And the plurality of separate substances would be totally destroyed.

#108. Now if anyone should wish to answer that the thing understood by one separate substance and the thing understood by another is not one in species, because the intellects differ in species, he would be deceiving himself; because that which is understood is related to understanding and to the intellect, as an object is related to an act and a power. Now the object does not receive species from an act nor from a power, but rather conversely. It must therefore be simply admitted that what is understood of one thing, for example, a stone, is one only, not merely for all men but also for all beings that understand.

#109. But it remains to be asked: what is that thing understood? For if they say that the thing understood is one immaterial species existing in the intellect, it escapes their notice that they are in some way going over to the doctrine of Plato, who held that no knowledge can be derived from sensible things, but all knowledge is from one separate form. For it is irrelevant to the question whether someone should say that the knowledge that is had of a stone is from one separ-

¹⁶ See Averroes, *In de Anima* III, comm. 5, p. 411, lines 713-717; St. Thomas,

De Spir. Creat. 9, ad 6.

ate form of stone or from one form of stone which is in the intellect; for in either case it follows that knowledge is not of things which are here, but only of separated things. But because Plato¹⁷ posited immaterial forms of this kind, subsisting through themselves, he was also able to posit with this many intellects participating in the knowledge of one truth from one separated form. But because they posit immaterial forms of this kind (which they say are things understood) in the intellect, they must hold that there is only one intellect, not merely for all men, but also absolutely.

#110. It must therefore be said according to Aristotle's position, that what is understood, what is one, is the nature itself or quiddity of the thing. For natural science and other sciences are about things, not about understood species. For if the thing understood were not the stone's very nature which is in things, but a species which is in the intellect, it would follow that I would not understand the thing that is the stone, but only the intention which is abstracted from the stone. But it is true that the nature of the stone as it is in singulars, is potentially intelligible but it is made actually intelligible by reason of the fact that species from sensible things, by means of the senses, reach the imagination, and that by the power of the agent intellect, the intelligible species are abstracted, and these exist in the possible intellect. Now these species are not related to the possible intellect as things understood, but as species by which the intellect understands¹⁸ (just as the species which are in vision are not things themselves that are seen, but those by which vision sees), except in so far as the intellect reflects upon itself, and this cannot occur in sense.

#111. Now if to understand were an action that crosses over to external matter, like to burn and to move, it would follow that to understand would be according to the way in which the nature of things has its being in singulars, just as the burning of fire is according to the mode of the burnable. But because to understand is an action that stays within the knower himself, as Aristotle says in Book IX of the *Metaphysics*,¹⁹ it follows that to understand is according to the mode of the knower, that is, according to the requirement of the species by which the knower understands.

Now this [species], since it is abstracted from individuating principles, does not represent the thing according to individual conditions, but only according to a universal nature. For if two things are joined in fact, nothing prevents one of them from being able to be represented without the other even in sense; whence the color of

¹⁷ For Plato's view, see Aristotle, *Met.* I, 6, 987b 4-18.

¹⁸ See *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 85, a. 2.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Met.* IX, 8, 1050a. 34-36.

honey or of an apple is seen by the sense of sight without the flavor of that thing. Thus, therefore, the intellect understands a universal nature by abstraction from individuating principles.

#112. It is therefore one thing which is understood both by me and by you. But it is understood by me in one way and by you in another, that is, by another intelligible species. And my understanding is one thing, and yours, another; and my intellect is one thing, and yours, another. Whence Aristotle says in the *Categories* that some knowledge is singular with reference to its subject "as a certain grammatical [point] is indeed in a subject, that is, in the soul, but is not said of any subject."²⁰ Whence also my intellect, when it understands itself to understand, understands a certain singular act; but when it understands "to understand" absolutely, it understands something universal. For singularity is not opposed to intelligibility, but materiality is;²¹ whence, since there are some immaterial singular things, as was said above concerning separate substances,²² nothing prevents singulars of this kind from being understood.

#113. Now from this it is clear in what way there is the same knowledge in the pupil and in the teacher.²³ For it is the same in relation to the thing known, but not, however, in relation to the intelligible species by which each one knows. For in this respect knowledge is individuated in me and in him. The knowledge which is in the pupil need not be caused by the knowledge which is in the teacher as the heat of the water by the heat of fire, but rather as the health which is in the matter [is caused] by the health which is in the soul of the doctor. For just as in a sick man there is a natural principle of health to which the doctor furnishes aids for the achieving of health, so in the pupil there is a natural principle of knowledge, namely the agent intellect and self-evident first principles; now the teacher furnishes certain aids by deducing conclusions from self-evident principles. Whence also the doctor tries to cure in a manner in which nature would cure, namely by heating and chilling; and the teacher leads to knowledge in the same way in which the one who learns would acquire knowledge by himself, namely by proceeding from the known to the unknown. And just as health is achieved in a sick man not according to the power of the doctor, but according to the capability of nature; so also knowledge is caused in the pupil not according to the power of the teacher, but according to the capability of the one learning.

²⁰ Aristotle, *Categories*, c. 2, 1a 25-27.

²¹ *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 76, a.2, ad 3.

²² See *De Un. Int.*, #102-103.

²³ See Averroes, *In de Anima* III, comm. 5, pp. 411-412, lines 717-721; St.

Thomas, *Sum. cont. Gent.* II, 75, ad 3; *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 117, a. 1; *De Spir. Creat.* 9, ad 7; *De Ver.* q. 11, a. 1.

(#114-116. Objection 4: If many intellectual substances were to remain after the destruction of their bodies, they would be inactive.)

#114. But they raise a further objection, that if many intellectual substances would remain after the destruction of their bodies, it would follow that they would be inactive; as Aristotle in Book XI of the *Metaphysics*²⁴ argues that if there were separate substances not moving a body, they would be inactive.²⁵ If they were to consider well the text of Aristotle, they could easily resolve this difficulty. For Aristotle, before he proposes this reasoning, says first: "Wherefore it is reasonable to maintain that there are so many substances and immovable principles; for to say it is necessary may be left to more competent thinkers."²⁶ From this it is clear that he himself is following some probability; he does not impose a necessity.

#115. Further, since what is inactive does not attain the end toward which it tends, it cannot be said even with probability that separate substances would be inactive if they would not move bodies; unless perchance it be said that the movements of bodies are the ends of separate substances. But this is quite impossible, since an end is superior to those things that tend towards the end. Whence Aristotle does not show here that they would be inactive if they did not move bodies, but that "every impassible substance that has in itself attained the best, must be considered an end."²⁷ For it is the greatest perfection of each thing that it not only be good in itself, but that it cause goodness in others. But it was not clear how separate substances would cause goodness in inferior things, except through the movement of some bodies. This is why Aristotle accepts a kind of probable reason in order to show that some separate substances are manifested only through the movements of the celestial bodies, although this [conclusion] has no necessity, as he himself says.²⁸

#116. Now we agree that the human soul does not have the highest perfection of its nature when separated from the body, for the soul is part of human nature. For no part has entire perfection if it is separated from the whole.²⁹ But it does not, on this account exist in vain; for the end of the human soul is not to move a body, but to understand; and in this is its happiness, as Aristotle proves in Book X of the *Ethics*.³⁰

²⁴ Aristotle, *Met.* XII, 8, 1074a 18-22.

²⁵ Keeler notes that the word "otiosae" is not found in Aristotle, but it does occur in Averroes' commentary on Aristotle's *Met.* XII, c. 8. See 1552 ed., fol. 156b 32.

²⁶ Aristotle, *Met.* XII, 8, 1074 a 15-17.

See St. Thomas, *Comm. in Met.* XII, lect. 10, 2586.

²⁷ Aristotle, *Met.* XII, 8, 1074a 17-20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 15-17, and *De Un. Int.*, #114.

²⁹ See *De Spir. Creat.* 2, ad 5.

³⁰ Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* X, c. 7, 1177a 12-18.

(#117-118. Objection 5: The intellects would be infinite in number.)

#117. They object further, in the assertion of their error, that if there were many intellects for many men, then, since the intellect is incorruptible, it would follow that the intellects would be actually infinite according to the position of Aristotle, who held that the world is eternal and that men always existed.³¹

Now Algazel answers this objection in this way in his *Metaphysics*;³² for he says that "in whatsoever there will have been one of them without the other," quantity or multitude without order, "infinity will not be removed from it, as from the motion of the heavens." And afterwards he adds: "We admit that likewise human souls, which are separable from bodies by death, are infinite in number, although they have their being at the same time, since there is no natural ordering among them upon the removal of which they would cease to be souls, in so far as none of them are causes of the others, but they exist at the same time without any priority or posteriority of nature and position. For priority and posteriority of nature is inconceivable in them unless it be according to the time of their creation. But in their essences, in so far as they are essences, there is no ordering in any way, but they are equal in being; the contrary is true for spaces and bodies, both for a cause and its effect."

#118. But how Aristotle would solve this, we cannot know, because we do not possess that part of the *Metaphysics* in which he wrote about separate substances.³³ For the Philosopher says in Book II of the *Physics*, that "the consideration" of forms "which are separate, yet in matter (in so far as they are separable), is the work of first philosophy."³⁴ But whatever may be said on this point, it is clear that Catholics, who hold that the world has had a beginning, have no reason for concern.

(#119-121. Objection 6: The unity of the intellect has been asserted by all philosophers except the Latins.)

#119. Now what they [the Averroists] say is clearly false, namely that it was a principle among all philosophers, both Arabs and Peripatetics, though not among the Latins, that the intellect is not multiplied numerically. For Algazel was not a Latin, but an Arab. Avicenna, too, who was an Arab, speaks thus in his book, *On the Soul*: "Prudence and folly and other things of this kind do not exist except in the essence of

³¹ See St. Thomas, *De Aeternitate Mundi*, near end; Siger of Brabant, *De Anima Intellectiva* VII, Quinto.

³² Algazel, *Met.* I, tr. 1, div. 6 (p. 40).

See note 9 to Chapter II.

³³ See note 101 to Chapter I.

³⁴ Aristotle, *Phys.* II, 2, 194b 13-15.

the soul. . . . Therefore, the soul is not one but many in number, and its species is one."³⁵

#120. And that we may not omit the Greeks, we should set down on this point the words of Themistius in his *Commentary*. For when he had inquired whether the agent intellect is one or many, he added by way of solution: "Or indeed the first illuminator is one, but those illuminated and illuminating are many. For the sun indeed is one, yet you will say that the light is shared in some way with regard to sight. For on this account, Aristotle did not posit the sun but light in his example, whereas Plato [posited] the sun."³⁶

Therefore it is clear from the words of Themistius that the agent intellect, of which Aristotle speaks and which is the illuminator, is not one, and the possible intellect which is illuminated is not one either. But it is true that the principle of illumination is one, that is, some separate substance—either God, according to Catholics,³⁷ or the last intelligence, according to Avicenna.³⁸ Now Themistius proves the unity of this separate principle through this that the teacher and the pupil understand the same thing, and this would not be unless the illuminating principle were the same. But it is true that he says afterwards that some had doubted whether the possible intellect is one.³⁹

#121. Nor does he say any more on this point, because it was not his intention to touch on the different opinions of the philosophers, but to explain the teachings of Aristotle, Plato, and Theophrastus; whence he concludes: "But what I have said in stating the views of the philosophers on this point is a matter needing extraordinary study and care. It is readily evident, however, that anyone, especially from the texts that we have gathered, will surely receive from them the teaching of Aristotle and Theophrastus, and more so, of Plato himself."⁴⁰

Therefore it is clear that Aristotle, Theophrastus, Themistius, and Plato himself did not hold it as a principle that the possible intellect is one in all [men]. It is also clear that Averroes wrongly reports the opinion of Themistius and Theophrastus concerning the possible and agent intellect. Hence we have for good reason called him the perverter of Peripatetic philosophy.⁴¹ And hence it is astonishing how some, looking only at the commentary of Averroes, presume to state what he himself says: that, with the exception of the Latins, this was the opinion of all the philosophers, both Greek and Arabian.

³⁵ Avicenna, *De Anima* V, c. 3, fol. 24va, in Klubertanz, p. 121.

³⁶ Themistius, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 235, lines 7-11.

³⁷ See St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 79, a. 4.

³⁸ Avicenna, *Met.* IX, c. 4, fol. 104v-

105r (Venice, 1508); *De Anima*, V, c. 5, fol. 26rb-va, in Klubertanz, pp. 130-132.

³⁹ Themistius, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 235-236, lines 15-40, esp. 30-32.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 244, lines 2-6.

⁴¹ See *De Un. Int.*, #59.

(#122-123. The opponent puts forth many statements that are rash and unworthy of a Christian man.)

#122. It is deserving of even greater wonder or even of indignation that someone⁴² who professes that he is a Christian, should presume to speak so irreverently about the Christian Faith, as when he says that the Latins do not hold this as a principle, that is, that there is only one intellect, because perhaps their law is against it. Here there are two evils: first, because he doubts whether this be against the faith; secondly, because he implies that he is outside this law. And because he later says: this is the reasoning by which Catholics seem to hold their supposition, where he calls a teaching of faith a supposition. What he dares to assert later is no less presumptuous: that God cannot make many intellects, because this would involve a contradiction.

#123. But what he says later is still more serious: "I necessarily conclude through reason that the intellect is one in number; but I firmly hold the opposite through faith."⁴³ Therefore he thinks that faith is concerned with some propositions whose contraries can be necessarily concluded. But since only a necessary truth can be concluded necessarily, and the opposite of this is something false and impossible, it follows, according to his remark, that faith would be concerned with something false and impossible, that not even God could effect. This the faithful cannot bear to hear.

It is also not without great rashness that he dares to dispute about those things that do not pertain to philosophy but are matters of pure faith, for example, that the soul may suffer hell fire,⁴⁴ and that he dares to say that the teachings of the doctors on this point should be rejected. With equal reasoning he could argue about the Trinity, the Incarnation, and other teachings of this kind. In such a way only an ignorant man would speak.

(#124. Conclusion.)

#124. This, therefore, is what we have written to destroy the aforesaid error not by means of the teachings of faith, but by means of the

⁴² Keeler notes that it is not known for certain who the opponent is whom St. Thomas corrects here and whose words he seems to be citing. It is commonly thought to be Siger, although the words cited here are not found in his works nor in other extant writings of the Averroists. However, in #124, the last section, St. Thomas seems to be criticizing his adversary's oral teaching.

⁴³ See *De Un. Int.*, #100, 105. Keeler notes that Siger does oppose to faith, the authority of the philosophers and their arguments. These arguments, even where they seem unanswerable, must yield to the faith. See *De Anima Intellectiva* III and VII.

⁴⁴ Siger, *Quaestiones in Tertium de Anima*, q. XI, in Van Steenberghen: *Siger: Les Oeuvres Inédites*, p. 170.

arguments and words of the philosophers themselves. But if there be anyone boasting of his knowledge, falsely so-called, who wishes to say something against what we have written here, let him not speak in corners, nor in the presence of boys who do not know how to judge about such difficult matters;⁴⁵ but let him write against this treatise if he dares;⁴⁶ and he will find not only me who am the least of others, but many other lovers of truth, by whom his error will be opposed or his ignorance remedied.

⁴⁵ Keeler notes that it seems to be implied here that the Averroists had already begun to circulate their opinions privately in small gatherings. (See Mandonnet, *op. cit.*, p. 211) That they did this in fact shortly thereafter seems clear from a decree of September 2, 1276. (*Chart. Univ.*

Paris. I, p. 539) See Introduction, Part C, note 34.

⁴⁶ Keeler notes that in some parts of the *De Anima Intellectiva* (q. III and q. VII) Siger makes references to this writing of St. Thomas. See Introduction, Part C; also Van Steenberghen, *Siger de Brabant* . . ., pp. 551-554.

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